[English]

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : The three language formula has been accepted by the country, by all the Chief Ministers and the Union Government, after a great deal of consideration. It is in force since 1966. This is a very sensitive issue. So far as the three language formula is concerned, in the Hindi speaking States, Hindi English and a modern Indian language, preferably one of the Southern languages, should be taught, In the non-Hindi speaking areas, Hindi, English and regional language are to be taught. This is the formula. Whatever modifications are to be made, we cannot do it without the consultation and the concurrence of the State Government in a federal country like ours. Therefore, a consensus is to be evolved. Up till now, we have not been able to have a consensus on this issue. Therefore, implementation of the Gujral Committee recommendations raises another question. There are many linguistic minorities. There are linguistic minorities in the North-East. In Karanata, there is a Telugu minority. There is also a Konkani minority. This is very complicated and a very sensitive matter and the Government will have to take a very cautions decision in consultation with the State Government.

[Translation]

SHRI ILIYAS AZMI : Now that you have clarified your stance on what you had decided regarding the inclusion of modern languages under the three language formula, would be implement the same strictly ?

Blindness

*502. SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether out of 42 million blind people in the world, 12 million are in India alone;

(b) whether it is a fact that in Bihar and Eastern States there are largest percentage of blind people;

(c) if so, whether Union Government have been providing assistance to NGOs for undertaking various schemes for treatment of blindness;

(d) if so, the total amount so far provided to NGOs for removal of blindness in the country;

(e) the details of schemes which have been implemented by them; and

(f) other measures being taken by the Government in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) to (f) A statement is laid on the table of the Lok Sabha.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir. More than 12 million persons are estimated to be blind in India with a visual acuity less than 6/60 in the better eye.

(b) No. Sir

(c) Currently five schemes are being implemented under National Programme for Control of Blindness (NPCB) with the participation of voluntary organisations.

(d) and (e) Grant in-Aid is given to non-profit NGOs under the following five schemes:-

(1) Scheme for free Cataract Surgery through camps.

(2) Scheme for free Cataract Surgery in fixed facilities.

(3) Scheme for generating public awareness about Eye Health Care and outreach activities.

(4) Scheme for setting up/strengthening of eye bank in voluntary sector.

(5) Scheme for setting up or expansion of Eye Care Units in rural and tribal areas.

An amount of Rs. 9,90,61,758 has been provided by the Centre either directly or through State Government to NGO during the last 5 years under all the five schemes. In addition NGOs are also getting financial assistance through District Blindness Control Societies at District level under Schemes No. 1 to 3 out of a sum of Rs. 44,89,00,000 which has been released to Societies during the preceding 5 years.

(f) Some of the measures taken by the Government to control Blindness in the country are as under:-

(1) Strengthening of Opthalmic infrastructure.

(2) Training Opthalmic manpower.

(3) Establishment of District Blindness Control Societies.

(4) Expanding coverage to rural and tribal areas.

(5) Creating awareness about the eye care among the masses.

(6) Increasing financial outlay in the annual budget, and

(7) Strengthening the monitoring of Eye Care activities at the Central, State and District level.